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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A process for tracking inbound documents in a business-to-business electronic commerce system, the process comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving an inbound document at a translator;

(b) the translator checking compliance of the document for translation from a source format to a desired target format;

(c) attempting translation of the document, and capturing error data representing errors to a tracking database; and

(d) extracting data from the document and using it to provide an internal document identifier, and saving the internal document identifier to the tracking database as an index for the error data.

2.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein step (b) comprises attempting recognition of syntax formats within a document data stream for compliance with configured formats, and configuring the translator.

3.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises parsing the received inbound document field-by-field and, for each field, checking the string byte size and delimiter characters.

4.   A process as claimed in claim 3, wherein step (c) further comprises checking sequence of fields against allowable record field groupings including required, optional, or conditional fields.

5.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the translator generates error data in step (c) for field character set, character size, and delimiters and continues translation processing.
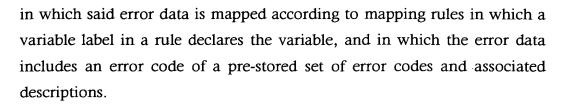
6.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the process is interrupted in step (c) with a return to a document data stream if an error relating to document structure is identified.

7.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein an error is detected at the stage of a mapping process in which a field of a target document is not populated.

8.   A process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the translation process is aborted if a target document field is not populated.

9.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises identifying errors after construction of a target document and output of said document through a stream.

10.   A process as claimed in claim 9, wherein step (c) comprises identifying field attribute, truncation, and character set errors after construction of a target document.

11.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step (d) comprises extracting data from both a document's enveloping information and from within the document.

12.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein error data is captured by writing values to variables in memory, and subsequently saving said values to the tracking database referenced to the internal document identifiers.

13.   A process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the memory variables include a temporary variable which can only reference a single value, and in which upon assignment of a subsequent value said subsequent value is treated as a valid variable value.

14.   A process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the memory variables include a list variable which can reference a plurality of values.

15.   A process as claimed in claim 12, wherein error data is mapped to said
5   variables according to mapping rules.

16.   A process as claimed in claim 15, wherein each variable has a label, and referencing a label of a variable in a mapping rule declares said variable.

10   17.   A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step (c) comprises generating an error code indicating the nature of the error, there being a pre-stored set of error codes and associated descriptions.

18.   A process for tracking inbound documents in a business-to-business electronic
15   commerce system, the process comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving an inbound document at a translator;

(b) the translator checking compliance of the document for translation from a
20   source format to a desired target format;

(c) attempting translation of the document, and capturing error data representing errors to a tracking database; and in which said error data is captured by writing values to variables in memory, said variables
25   comprising:

a temporary variable which can only reference a single value, and in which upon assignment of a subsequent value said subsequent value is treated as a valid variable value, and

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a list variable which can reference a plurality of values,

in which said error data is mapped according to mapping rules in which a variable label in a rule declares the variable, and in which the error data includes an error code of a pre-stored set of error codes and associated descriptions.

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(d) extracting data from the document and using it to provide an internal document identifier, and saving the internal document identifier to the tracking database as an index for the error data.

10   19.   An electronic commerce system comprising a translator comprising means for performing a process as claimed in claim 1.

20.   A computer program product comprising software code for performing the steps of claim 1 when executing on a digital computer.